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A

LETTER

TO

Dr. CADOGAN.

OCCASIONED BY HIS

DISSERTATION on the GOUT, &c.

"Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdin."

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PREFACE.

I Have only one requeſt to make to my reader; and yet I much doubt its being granted me, though I think too, I may ſafely ſay, it is as much for his own ſake as mine; it is this: that he will not, in remarking any particular error or miſtake, be it real or imaginary, overlook or reject what *he* has thought juſt and true: though the former be ever ſo groſs and abſurd, it can have no connection with the latter; I mean, however, if not *a principle*.

I the more willingly premiſe this, becauſe if it ſhould happen, that this little fruit and amuſement of a very few idle hours, be, as many a ſilly book has been, thought worthy

criticiſing, I certainly ſhall not ſtand up in its defence.

To its ſucceſs, I am entirely indifferent; any farther than from any poſſibility of its removing, in any degree, the prejudices and errors of authority.

To *the few*, I addreſs it; from whom alone, primarily at leaſt, any ſuch poſſibility can be expected. Errors *they* will probably find, I am not aware of; and having no intereſt whatever in them, I ſhall think it a gain to myſelf, if I ſhould happen to hear of ſuch being detected: as to the endleſs objections of ſophiſtry, prejudice, or folly, they can alſo only, though in another way, contribute to my ſecret amuſement.

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LETTER

TO

Dr. CADOGAN.

NOT long ſince, a ſenſible perſon recommended to me a very ingenious new book, he was ſure would pleaſe me. I aſked him the ſubject? He ſaid, it was to ſhew, amongſt many other things, that the gout was not hereditary. I told my friend, that the ſubject of the book ſatisfied me; as *that*, or the *title* only, often had done in other books. To inſtance in only one, Sir; you alſo inſtance (for I have read your book, you ſee) The Origin of Evil—and yet ſome parts of *that* I afterwards ran my eye over.

Yes, Sir, entirely by accident, and unexpectedly, I happened to drop on your pamphlet; and, being quite alone, I dipped into it, and inſenſibly read it through. I found it the work of a ſenſible, knowing, and ſpirited man; and my friend ſaid true; it has amuſed me.—But, I find, that not only it has amuſed, but convinced numberleſs readers. That indeed does not ſurprize me; for if the nature of man prompt the ſtrong mind to offer what is chimerical or ſpecious, ſhall it not prompt the weak one to receive it? You begin your book, Sir, with a quotation from a French writer. Allow me, in return, to offer you one from a very ſpirited Engliſh writer you are not unacquainted with. It is this: "I do not always pin my faith "upon books, knowing it to be no uncom-"mon thing for authors, inſtead of framing "their ſyſtem from obſervation and expe-"rience, to wreſt and explain both, to ſupport "their opinions." Diſſertation on the Gout, &c. p. 89.

I muſt begin my little letter, Sir, by acknowledging myſelf as ignorant of phyſic, and

and even of anatomy (a knowledge I ſhould be ſorry to poſſeſs, leſt it might be a frightful one to me) as the cook-maid, you tell us, was of the nature of fire. This acknowledgement, however, may not perhaps much prediſpoſe my readers in my favour: yet as ſhe muſt have known, at leaſt as well as Sir Iſaac Newton, the effect of fire in roaſting her meat, or burning herſelf; ſo I think, that I, or any one elſe, muſt know as well as the deepeſt reſearcher into the nature of the medicine that operates its effects on my ſolids or fluids, or the nature of thoſe ſolids or fluids that are operated upon; I ſay, that I, however ignorant, muſt know *what* the operation and effect is to me, or any one elſe I ſee and conſult, as well as that knowing and deep reſearcher into the *why* and *wherefore* of both; in ſhort, I am, as to matter of fact, either in myſelf, or all around me, *cæteris paribus*, juſt as good a judge as the ableſt phyſician in the world.

This doctrine, however, ſimple and certain as I believe, Sir, you will allow it to be,

and free as it really is from arrogance, is not the doctrine of many of your readers. They, good gentlemen and good ladies, much prefer the famous Doctor's word to their own feeling or seeing; and though I will not doubt your mind's being superior to the availing yourself of it, it is, I doubt not, sensible of its general truth.

I do not mean, Sir, to follow you page by page through your spirited and ingenious work; it is sufficient to my purpose to attend to its leading principles, and to reason from what I alone can reason from, or barely need reason from, plain matter of fact: nay, in truth, were I to follow you so closely, my business would rather be to applaud and approve and learn, than contest.

To the point then:—"The gout is *not* "hereditary; it is *not* periodical; and it is "*not* incurable."—But when we use terms ourselves, or quote them from others, it is highly proper (and, alas! too often necessary) to have a clear idea of them, and to

be

be perfectly agreed about them; let us then see what you say in proof of the gout's *not* being hereditary.

1st, You say, "If it were hereditary, it "would be necessarily transmitted from fa- "ther to son; and no man, whose father had "it, could possibly be free from it." And here I stop a moment, though certainly, Sir, with intention fairly to see what you proceed to say; and I ask (what you will acknowledge not quite impertinent) has not every man *a mother* as well as *father?*—You proceed to say, "But this is not the case; there "are many instances to the contrary: it is "therefore not necessarily so."—Here again I stop, and I ask, did ever any one advance, that it was *necessarily* hereditary? Is that the meaning, when the term *hereditary* is used? —Next you say, "But the father's having it, "inclines or disposes the son to it." This is in truth what *is* said, and all that is said, and what appears to me, a mere *matter of fact-man*, to be incontestably true. "This, "say you, is the *causa proegumena* or *prædis-* "*ponent* of the learned, which of itself ne-

"ver

" ver produced any effect at all; there muſt " be joined the *cauſa procatarctica*, or active " efficient cauſe, that is, our own intempe- " rance or miſtaken habit of life, to produce " it; and accordingly as this operates more " or leſs, ſo will the gout be. Our parents " undoubtedly give us conſtitutions ſimilar " to their own; and, if we live in the ſame " manner they did, we ſhall very probably " be troubled with the ſame diſeaſes; but " this by no means proves them to be here- " ditary: it is what we do ourſelves that " will either bring them on, or keep them " off."

In anſwer to this paragraph, I firſt ſay, that theſe terms of the learned are ſo learned, that I could hardly read, or write them, much leſs underſtand them: *prædiſponent*, however, I underſtand very well, and the meaning of the other is clear from the ſubject. In ſhort, they ſay, what is before ſaid in plain Engliſh; and you tell us, the *prædiſponent* is what " of itſelf never produced any effect at all." Of itſelf, agreed: but, if joined to the other cauſe (*Anglicè*, the active and efficient cauſe)

they both together give me the gout, and my neighbour is free from this *prædiſponent*, and eſcapes it; if this happens, ſurely we are not on a par, and he is better off than me*. But no, ſay you, "if our parents had the gout, and "we live as they did, we ſhall probably have "it; but this proves not that the gout, or any "other diſorder, is hereditary." This ſeems to me, Sir, if any, a very fine diſtinction. But what if my father had the gout, and procured it, if you pleaſe, by drinking and by exceſs, and I have it, *without* living as he did; nay, with living what I call, and what you will call for a moment, very ſoberly, is not this neither to be called hereditary? is not this neither a viſiting the fathers on the children? No, for it will depend on me to keep it off by diet and care. Very likely it may;

* In illuſtration of this doctrine, are not every man's apprehenſions of the ſmall-pox well founded from this *prædiſponent?* and does not inoculation, in giving him the diſtemper ſlightly, if ſometimes to be called *a diſtemper*, both take away his apprehenſions, and render him free from the prædiſponent *in futuro?* And, as a farther illuſtration of what I ſay, have not there been innumerable treatiſes written by phyſicians, and even now writing on the continent, againſt inoculation, from reaſonings *à priori* againſt the evidence of the ſenſes *à poſteriori?*

at

at leaſt, I will not diſpute its certainty; but then I ſhould call this, not the *not* inheriting the gout, but the getting rid of it, as I may of any other inheritance, *after* I had inherited it.

You proceed to ſay, "If it were hereditary, "it would appear in infancy and in women, "which in general it does not." *In general* ſhould not, I think, have been in this ſentence, to make it compleat: and ſince it does *ſometimes*, you allow, come to them, how does it come? And, pleaſe to mark, Sir, one inſtance here, unleſs you ſatisfactorily account for it, ſerves my purpoſe, and contradicts yours as well as a thouſand.

But you ſay, "I may be told of ſome "women, who have had it. I believe never "very young, nor till they had contributed "to it themſelves," (indeed, Sir, I believe very much otherwiſe;) "for women as well "as men may abuſe a good conſtitution." I beg pardon, Sir; but do you not here get over the river without a bridge? And is not this one inſtance of favourite hypotheſes not

ſtopping

ſtopping at a full ſtop? You add, "I have "heard likewiſe of a boy or two, out of a "million, that had it, or ſomething like it; "but theſe boys had been ſuffered to ſip "wine very early, and been fed and indulged "every way moſt unwholeſomely." If they had *not*, Sir, they would certainly do much hurt to your ſyſtem. But are you ſure of the fact, as to all theſe boys? Certainly, you will not ſay you are. And yet it is neceſſary you ſhould, for even the appearance of the thing; for then it would, in truth, be no more than appearance; in truth, ſmall appearance enough; and by no means confirm and realize your ſyſtem. Oh ye readers, as well as writers! would ye but ſtop ſhort at theſe fallacious links—theſe links, which, if not true and good, muſt ever annihilate the ſuppoſed chain—what volumes would be ſpared to the world, and what improvements in the faiths of mankind!

But then, on the other hand, what ſatisfaction muſt be ſacrificed, both in the writer and reader—for do not both ſlurr and get over theſe little ungain ſtays and ſtops, and run as faſt as they can into that high road, in

which they both move ſo glibly and ſatiſfactorily to themſelves; in which every thing is right, true, and delightful to both!

When the agreeable writer, you ſo juſtly animadvert upon, and ſo juſtly ſtile agreeable, tells us, that moral evil is what we bring upon ourſelves voluntarily, he certainly ſaid true of much of moral evil: but what then *? And thus, Sir, if you tell us, that many a man, moſt men if you pleaſe, bring the gout on themſelves by intemperance, you ſay very true: but what then? The queſtion ſeems this: Does John, who lives very intemperately, eſcape the gout? and Thomas, who lives very temperately (pray, allow me, for a moment, my idea of tem-

* To do juſtice to this writer, I recollect he admits of *ſome* inevitable, unmerited evil; and he accounts for it, by ſuppoſing it *neceſſary* in *general creation* (very much as Pope and Bolingbroke have done); and that this particular evil is ſome how or another (God knows indeed how) to be the cauſe of happineſs elſewhere. Nay, in his preface to the edition I ſaw, he mentions the facetious query of ſome critic, who aſks, whether other created beings in planets, or elſewhere, are ſinging and dancing, when we are on the rack of pain and miſery? And this, ſtrange indeed! is given as a ſilly, trifling criticiſm by himſelf, without the leaſt reply to it.

perance)

perance) acquire the gout? And farther, was John's father and family free from the gout, whilſt Thomas's father and many of his family died of it? If this happens in a variety of inſtances, (and does it not happen in a variety of inſtances?) what objection is there to the common vulgar opinion, that the gout is hereditary?

Your next ſentence is a kind of corollary; it is, at leaſt, a ſyllogiſm: "No diſeaſes," ſay you, "are hereditary, but thoſe of taint "or infection, and maleformation; the gout "is none of theſe, and therefore is not he-"reditary." But ſuppoſe your *major* be denied? I myſelf know a whole family, who have a hectic coſtive habit, and by no care can conquer it: their father had the ſame before them. I ſhould rather have thought almoſt every thing was, or might be, (mark, Sir, I ſay might be, and may be) hereditary: I ſee motions, attitudes, a manner, perhaps an acquired one by the parent, a trifle, a nothing, often hereditary; yes, Sir, and in ſons or daughters, who have lived moſtly away from their parents: nor does this law of nature ſurprize me; if the countenance,

the outſide, is hereditary, why not the inſide?

Without the leaſt knowledge either of medicine or the human frame, ſurely common ſenſe may authorize me to ſuppoſe it very natural for the blood, or rather the humours, and the habit of body that breeds thoſe humours, to be tranſmitted from parent to its progeny; and conſequently for the gouty blood, humours and habit of, body to be ſo tranſmitted?—But what is all this reaſoning *à priori*, againſt it?—A ſad way of reaſoning ſurely, Sir, and very ſad indeed, if it claſhes with and contradicts the matter of fact.

On the other hand, it ſeems to me extremely natural, that this habit, and this diſpoſition, be purified and corrected by ſimple food, whether milk, vegetables, or other; and, on the contrary, be encouraged and fed by inflammatory liquors or viands: and this in two words ſeems to me the whole hiſtory of the inheritance or the cure of the gout; a very old and vulgar hiſtory, and how-

however falſe ſuch an one often is, in this inſtance I ſhould think a very exact and true one.

That any cure is to be had for this diſorder from medicine, you ſeem to think impoſſible: certainly, it ſeems improbable, ſince none has hitherto been diſcovered. But your reaſoning on the matter, you ſay, is concluſive: "Indeed there is a moſt glaring abſurdity at firſt ſight, that muſt ſtop any man of common ſenſe, who has the leaſt inſight into nature, or knowledge of the human frame: for if the gout be the neceſſary effect of intemperance, as I hope to ſhew very evidently that it is, a medicine to cure it muſt be ſomething that will enable a man to bear the daily intemperance of his future life unhurt by the gout, or any other diſeaſe." But, *if*, Sir, it be *not* the neceſſary effect of intemperance, and you do *not*, agreeable to your hope, "evidently ſhew that *it is?*"—and ſurely, I, and every one, may hardily advance, that it is not the *neceſſary* effect of intemperance; ſince I, and every one knows of a va-

a variety of inſtances of intemperance, that have *not* been followed by the gout, as we do of temperance that have been followed by the gout.

But you ſeem all along to inſiſt on a radical cure being the cure contended for; and, if not radical, *i. e.* that I am for ever ſecured againſt return, it is no cure at all. A cure, properly ſpeaking, of any diſorder whatever, ſeems to me to be only the removal of that diſorder from me, when I have it; and, if any man found ſuch cure, he might, I think, be well ſatisfied by applying to it *toties quoties*.

I confeſs, I by no means comprehend what you advance more than once, that there is no cure for any chronic diſorder; nay, you ſay, "I am very ſure, that no invalid was "ever made a healthy man by the mere "power of medicine." I have ſuſpected myſelf that I did not quite underſtand you, or take your exact meaning; and I know not whether I now do or not: for ſurely, Sir, little as I in general believe in phyſic or phyſicians,

ſicians, I muſt think, that men have been cured of rheumatiſm, ſcurvy, the venereal diſorder, and, above all, fevers, by medicine: which laſt, though I believe the technical phyſical term for them is not *chronic*, yet medicine at leaſt cures it. To be ſure, I muſt miſtake your meaning. In regard to an intermittent fever, whether chronic or not, certainly it is cured to all intents and purpoſes, liable moſt certainly to return, but cured, I ſay, to all intents and purpoſes, by the bark: that almoſt miraculous remedy! And, by the way, *till* that miraculous remedy was known, or rather if it was now *not* known, might we not uſe the ſame argument you do, about the gout, *viz.* ſince nothing had yet been diſcovered, nothing ever would? This, I own, is putting the gout not on your footing.

But in regard to cures for diſorders, what think you, Sir, of one you have neither blamed nor commended, nor named, James's Powders? And, I hope, in applying to a phyſician, I do not apply to an enemy to that providential gift of heaven. Shall I confeſs it, Sir? Yes, all blaſphemous to the

college as it muſt be, my faith, my almoſt only faith, is *in* quacks. But here alſo perhaps we ſhould come to our definitions; What is a quack? Advertiſers in the newspapers are quacks? Certainly they are, nine out of ten; but, if any man or any old woman, quack or not quack, ſhews me, by matter of fact, he or ſhe cures any particular diſorder, that quack, or that old woman, I immediately pin my faith upon; and as to the *quomodo*, I am perfectly indifferent. Far be it from me, Sir, to reproach you with it; but that there is, in all bodies of men, what the French call *eſprit de corps*, you certainly well know. With indignation have I too often ſeen it. I confeſs, Sir, as to James's Powders, I, who have ſo often ſeen James's Powders ſtay and put by the regular, and, I believe, otherwiſe certain approaches of death; from all I have ſeen or heard of them, I believe, they *never* fail a cure in the moſt raging inflammatory fever. Other caſes, beſide thoſe inflammatory ones, I do not mention, as I do not well know them.

I have

I have met with phyſicians, eſpecially of late years, not averſe, nay favourable, to James's Powders; but never, I think, with any one who expreſſed himſelf exactly *towards them* as, at leaſt I have thought, he might, and ought, to have done. "I am "no enemy, Sir, to James's Powders; nay, "would recommend them. But then, Sir, "they muſt not be given improperly, &c. "&c. &c."—Yet how many lives in my memory, and how many more in my time, have, from the detention of them, been made, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, negative ſacrifices at the ſhrine of Eſculapius! How many, to ſpeak plainly, and very ſeriouſly, have died for the want of this providential remedy!

Did not you (frequently have I aſked a friend or acquaintance of the deceaſed) give James's Powders? No, Dr. ....., did not adviſe them. Adviſe them? Is there any want of advice in the caſe; or more of a Doctor's than of any other man's?—Oh, I aſſure you, I confide entirely in Dr. .....: I know, as my poor friend did, his ſkill,

his integrity, and his attention; and I am ſure he *knows better than me*, as my friend was ſure he knew better than him.

How often have I ſaid on theſe occaſions (as Shakeſpeare makes his mob ſay of Caſca the Poet), Well, this man, if one ever could ſay it conſiſtent with humanity, deſerved to die *for being a fool.* I will not add what I have ſometimes ſaid the phyſician deſerved who kept back from his ſheep-like patient theſe ſovereign Powders. "I do not know "the ingredients, Sir," over and over are we told, here and elſewhere, by the phyſician. And ſtill, and for ever, would I return to him, And pray, Doctor, what then?—Might I not, alas! return, And is *that*, Doctor, really and truly, and in the bottom of your ſoul, the very motive of your not giving them? *

* A diſtinction is here very proper; and, I think, every ſenſible man will admit it. By no means would I charge even *any* phyſician with the voluntary intention of riſking the death of a patient: I believe phyſicians, in general, are a reſpectable ſet of men. But then, I believe, prejudice, and intereſt too, naturally gives a bias to all men; and whether voluntarily or involuntarily, what is it to me, who die from either one or the other?

Thus

Thus, at this moment, on the continent are men, and ſets of men, purſuing a ſimilar mode of ſtrange reaſoning in regard to what I mentioned before, Inoculation: they are ſeeking the opinions of phyſicians and colleges of phyſicians upon the important alternative of inoculating or not inoculating their children or themſelves. In God's name, have I myſelf more than once ſaid to them, why conſult on this occaſion phyſicians more than other men? There are reaſons enough why you ſhould conſult them *leſs*. The ſingle conſultation, Gentlemen, neceſſary for you, ſeems to be this: ſend over to England, if aſking will not do, and let your own people ſee what is, or is not, the ſucceſs of the practice, now univerſal in that country.—No, they underſtand not, all ſimple as it is, your reaſoning, and prefer dying by the book and word of the great men *who know ſo much better than themſelves*.

And is not the caſe of James's Powders exactly parallel to this? Certainly. But then the difference here between us and them, (I

mean, as to Inoculation) in regard to the incipient mind, is immenſe; whilſt *we are paſt* the time, or reign of the folly, *they are* (as we *have been)* actually under its dominion—" Mutato nomine, de te, &c.—At firſt ſight it may perhaps appear to the innocent ſpeculator, that demonſtration and conviction were neceſſary appendages, in the nature of things, one to the other: certainly, Sir, did not all-eloquent matter of fact well aſſure us of the contrary, we never could believe that, in the nature of things, one followed and was *gained* by the other, if at all, juſt as you *gain* a town or citadel; by a regular ſiege: and happy, and ſhort too, may you often reckon yours, if no longer than that of Troy.

Could I at all hope to reſtore man to the dignity of man, and to the free uſe of his own eyes and ears, on this ſingle, but great occaſion of James's Powders, by no means ſhould I look on this little *jeu d' eſprit*, as I had conſidered it, as one; but ſanctify it with a much happier and better title. Could I encourage people to the retroſpect of the numbers of their acquaintance, relations, friends,

friends, who, however intereſting to them, however dear, had in the courſe of a few years been conſumed, miſerably burnt up and deſtroyed, inſtead of now living among them, by the furious rage of fevers; and from thence induce them all to embrace this friend to life I would introduce to them; happy indeed, and not unimportant, would be the little labours of this little work!

In regard to other quack medicines, as they are I think all, when unknown, promiſcuouſly called, Norton's Drops I have heard much of in inveterate ſcurvies: nay, have I not heard, from good authority, that Ward's, even Ward's medicine, Sir, cures the dropſy, if nothing elſe; that a noſtrum is diſcovered even for ſetting aſide the dreadful effect of the bite of a mad dog? To others I leave the examination of other well-atteſted cures, if ſuch there really be, from ſecret and unknown chemical mixtures, whether of Antimony, Turpentine, Mercury, or any other poiſon; and pardon me, Sir, if I cannot help ſtill believing it poſſible for ſuch a diſcovery to be made even for the gout.

Permit

Permit me to add here, that, to me at leaſt, it is quite new doctrine, that the palſy, ſtone, nervous diſorders, &c. &c. have one common principle and origin with the gout. Yet do we not ſee marked characteriſtics of variation in *the ſame*, certainly in *almoſt* the ſame, *diſorder*; the ſmall-pox, chicken-pox, meazles, &c. &c.; and therefore, as I ſhould have ſuppoſed, different and ſeparate origins? As to the minuteneſs of Nature, and its *wonderful diviſibility* (not to enter here into whether *really* or not *infinite*), Nature's power and practice is, I think, too well known to ſurprize.

I have often had, Sir, a whimſical idea, which I will expoſe even to you: it is this; that very likely there was *in nature* an antidote for every poſſible diſeaſe in nature; but I have at the ſame time concluded, that though it were poſſible to find them out, it would be impoſſible to apply them, from the intermediate paſſages, or diſpoſitions, or diſorders of the human frame. But why ſhould I ſuſpect any ſuch thing? From this, Sir; the apparent, manifeſt antidote to the ſeveral

diſorders

diſorders I do ſee; and thoſe chiefly found, as the loadſtone was to mariners, by accident—to mention only the bark. Till now, I had alſo imagined that remedy of nature, mineral waters, at Bath and elſewhere, powerful and real correctors of the human frame. No, ſay you, it is the water, merely as water, that really does the buſineſs: "it is *the element* "that dilutes and carries off crudities and in-"digeſtions, &c. The mineral virtues they "contain may make them tolerable to the "ſtomach in their paſſage, but do, as I be-"lieve, little more in the body: it is the "water that cures."

Surely, with ſubmiſſion, this is ſaying too much, Sir. That a mineral water may, from the mere common property of water, do great good, I have no doubt; nay farther, that the journey, regular life, good hours, and change of air, may do ſtill more. But yet I think the effects *we ſee* at Buxton, Bath, and elſewhere, may fairly and reaſonably be often referred to the mineral mixtures of nature chiefly, if not ſolely. Indeed, as to the latter place, have not the *waters*, to ſome conſtitutions and complaints, *more* than the *in-*

flammatory

flammatory property of *wine* you ſo ſeriouſly, not to ſay ardently, decry?—and yet to ſtomachs deſtroyed *by wine*, can the writer himſelf doubt of (from ſome cauſe or other) their frequent, and *very great, very wonderful effects*; or, conſequently, of this being at leaſt a caſe of exception to his rule? Candidly could I wiſh himſelf to enquire farther into this matter of fact; though certainly, indeed, it cannot be one that will corroborate his leading principle in regard to the all-powerful and all-ſufficient operation of diet. And as to that conſideration, I would as candidly aſk, whether the quotation already made might be here unaptly repeated; viz. "I do "not always pin my faith upon books, know-"ing it to be no uncommon thing for au-"thors, inſtead of framing their ſyſtem from "obſervation and experience, to wreſt and "explain both, to ſupport their opinions."

But, in a philoſophical light, I might perhaps be told, nature never meant we ſhould live as we do; and you have, I think, told us ſomething to that effect. If we believe ſome reaſoners, though perhaps I may rather call them dreamers, with Rouſſeau at the head

head of them, nature meant we ſhould live in the woods, and nearly upon acorns *. *Nature*, and *natural*, appear to me very vague terms. I believe Nature, or Providence, or whatever be the appellation, *meant* we ſhould live (as well as eat) various ways, and, amongſt others, as we do. Elſe whence the degree of underſtanding, the variety of talents, the paſſions, pleaſures, ambition, inclinations, caſts, we feel and are actuated by in our ſituation? No man can adopt any one

* This great man (and great too he really is) wrote an elaborate treatiſe to prove, that man, for a period much longer than the given age of the world, lived in a ſtate of brutality, *ſans* ideas, *ſans* cloathing, *ſans* ſpeech, *ſans* every thing. And, wonderful! one of his ſuggeſtions was, Why may not the Man of the Mountains, the Ouran-Outan, be of the remains of theſe old aboriginal inhabitants?—Not even the different formation of the foot ſtopped his hypotheſis!—He has alſo written on education, though ſometimes alſo greatly, much oftener like a man full as wild as his own wild men. Yet here ſome *other* enlarged men have really and truly ſet about his very education.

diſpoſition of a horſe or cow. If Nature, for inſtance, gave a cure for a fever, ſurely ſhe meant, or foreſaw (which is a fine diſtinction again) the fever as well as the cure. —If it be ſaid, this ſeems a ſtrange proceeding in Nature, and that ſhe might as well neither give one nor the other; I, ſtill recurring to my matter of fact, would aſk, why ſhe gave the hare the inſtinct of doubling, and eluding the efforts of her perſecuting hounds; and gave them alſo the inſtinct of ſcenting her tract, and perhaps outwitting her art?— But this is metaphyſical, and wide of the preſent purpoſe. To return to it:

But in regard to the gout, you ſpeak of a famous pretenſion to cure it, now many years ago, and which at the time had at leaſt as much vogue as one you do not *name*, but certainly, Sir, *thought* ſufficiently of, before you ſet about your work. You ſay, I think, you have known towards ſixty perſons who

took

took it, and all died to a man. I happen to have known of five or ſix who alſo died, in all human probability, from the effect of it; yet I alſo happen now to know of three or four gouty men who are not dead of it, though I ſuppoſe it probably hurt them. The diſcovery was doubtleſs a very unfortunate one: but what do I infer from it? I will tell you, Sir, and perhaps to your ſurprize, it appears to me an argument not in your favour, but againſt you; and thus:—This medicine was pernicious in its operation, for it ſtopped, and as it were locked up, the humour which would have turned to gout, and carried itſelf off perhaps that way. But if this medicine ſo particularly applied to that very place, that very door, as it were, that channel where the gout was to come out; and the lame conſtitution flung off other humours, in other diſorders, whether rheumatiſm, &c. &c. &c.; is not this fairly to be inferred, that there is a particular door or channel for the gout, diſ-

tinguiſhed and marked for the gout, and only the gout? and if ſo, is not the gout a ſpecies of itſelf, to which, ſince you can in particular *apply to* in ill, you may, in the poſſibility of things, *apply to* in good; as to the door of the fever, or ſmall-pox, or any other malady?

You have claſſed, in three general claſſes of Indolence, Intemperance, and Vexation, all the cauſes of diſorders among men; and you have ſtrongly, and doubtleſs very truly, as well as very learnedly, painted the direful conſequences of each. But then thoſe direful conſequences are *the few*; and do you give them, Sir, quite *as ſuch?* Accidental ill you except; but ſurely you give to it a portion much too ſcanty: and whether in the ignorance of my heart, or not, I cannot ſay; but as to myſelf, I confeſs my preſent perfect belief of colds being caught "*no one knows* "*how*," and often from thence, if neglected, a diſ-

a diſordered blood and frame, that ends in very bad, if not fatal illneſſes. And in this, Sir, do I deviate from either obſervation or experience? But I mean not by any means to enter minutely into this great field. Exerciſe and temperance you ſtrongly recommend as their opponents; but you ſpeak not of the exceſs, I think, of either. And yet, to ſpeak only of the former, are you aware of the pernicious effects of exceſſive exerciſe? If a fox-hunter, you might ſee it in your favourite hounds, catching and twitching on your hearth, and yielding up their faculties and your ſport from them, prematurely, in the field. The ſame muſt happen to men.

In regard to temperance, ſurely *moſt men*, from accident, *may* live out their natural days in health and vigour, far out of the pale of your medical church; at leaſt, may I not ſay, we might have heard of more exceptions to

your rules, when we all too well know ſo many examples of bucks of fourſcore, and certainly ſo many more of men, who have drunk much more wine than you abſolutely recommend, and eat ſalt, pepper, nay, and even *pickles*, Sir, *&c. &c.* through their whole days.

Nature, again, I believe, in general, took care and provided againſt being ſo eaſily overturned; and however, I mean in whatever *manner*, our inſides may perform their functions, all the theory you give about perverting her courſe, from intemperance, is ſurely not realized in fact. This, mere matter of fact ſeems to inform me. Is it certain, Sir, that the abſtemiouſneſs of Portugal or Italy you tell us of, as of any other hot climates, would be equally beneficial in ours to any perſon; and I muſt ſuppoſe you mention it to ſome end? How the fact ſtands, as to the comparative longævity,

longævity, I indeed do not know, though certainly much might be deduced from it; yet mark, Sir, I mean much of *probable*; for, while other *poſſible* cauſes exiſt, will true philoſophy admit of more? — You, indeed, end by not recommending this degree of abſtemiouſneſs; and I think I act with fairneſs, in recounting thus how far you do, or do not, mention or recommend it.

What an account might be made out, in theory, of the ſtrange mixtures put into the ſtomach in half an hour at a great man's table; and yet how many live, even forty years together, unhurt by them! Thus, in part, you very ſtrongly deſcribe them: "If this "be true of the common provocatives at "every poor man's board," (viz. ſalt, pepper, muſtard, vinegar, pickles; *riſum teneatis?*) "who is there that exceeds not Nature's law? "who is truly temperate? What ſhall we

"ſay

" ſay of that ſtudied, refined, laboured ex-
" travagance at the tables of the rich,
" where the culinary arts are puſhed to that
" exceſs, that luxury is become falſe to itſelf,
" and things are valued, not as they are good
" and agreeable" (do you think, Sir, that every man who really, I mean free from affectation, loves the beſt French diſh of the beſt French cook, will admit the latter epithet, however often uſed by you or other writers, in regard to himſelf at leaſt, which is all he wants)
" to the natural and undebauched appetite, but
" high and inflammatory, &c. &c." and where
" every meal he makes ſerves to overload the
" ſtomach, to foul and inflame the blood, ob-
" ſtruct and choak all the capillary channels,
" &c. &c. &c." — That temperance, and even abſtemiouſneſs, and much more than is generally practiſed, would make men healthier in general, and live longer, who can doubt? And, upon my word, Sir, need

there

there be a ghoſt to come and tell us ſo?—I will alſo grant and ſuppoſe, that a life of ſimplicity, in every reſpect beyond what any of us practiſe, would make us ſtronger and healthier; but then it muſt be conſidered alſo, that we are born of parents who have, as you grant, communicated to us their bad conſtitutions, as their parents did to them, and that habit in good living has made it in a manner natural if not neceſſary to us. If indeed you overload your ſtomach, and eat too much, how ſhould it agree with you? Surely this, Sir, is the *chief* cauſe of indigeſtions, and not the mixtures or viands.

But I cannot help obſerving what I confeſs I could not help remarking with a ſmile, at the commencement of your work, I mean that you quoted unluckily in St. Evremont for longævity; for, whatever were his ſentiments, or theory, or longævity; in practice, he was an errant voluptuary. And, if I recollect rightly, he ſays as much, and recommends it in his writings. He was, as you will well recollect, Sir, one of the famous Coteaux-Society, or Petroniuſes of the age; and very particularly in the refinements

of the table, which he piqued himſelf upon underſtanding, and which it is certain every one does not underſtand who pretends to it.

Nay, undoubtedly, as you recollect alſo, he wrote a parallel between Petronius and Seneca, much in favour of the former, and thereby incurred the laſh of the famous and auſtere Boileau :

" Malgré ce que St. Evremont nous prône,
" Je croirai toujours Seneque avant Petronne."

Yes, Sir, it really made me ſmile to ſee ſuch an inſtance and example as St. Evremont produced to your readers in illuſtration of an hypotheſis he ſo flatly appeared to me to contradict. May I be allowed to offer him as an example of quite another ſort, to the ſame readers you addreſs, I mean, the men of faſhion of the preſent age? " A practical philoſopher" he was, Sir, and well deſerving the imitation at leaſt of thoſe who profeſs *the ſame ſort of philoſophy*; for he united ſentiment, literature, and elegant voluptuouſneſs, " the " feaſt of reaſon and the flow of ſoul," with manlineſs, dignity, and the manners of a man of quality; and whilſt he proved his taſte and inclination equal to that rare power of

of well ſpending a great fortune, he alſo proved his philoſophy in that ſtill more rare power of uniting with it, and ſubmitting to, the œconomy of a contracted one. He proved not only the extent, but fulneſs of his circle, which, rare indeed! was even extended to each oppoſite perfection. A philoſopher, Sir, you rightly call him. He proved this again, in at once embracing the manly idea of canvaſſing and reflecting upon, free from all authoritative opinions, the life and real character of Auguſtus, and ſome others of the moſt eminent Romans; and, as a ſoldier, in ſerving with diſtinction under Marſhal Turenne; and he proved the native taſte and elegance of his feeling (that general tho' undefineable ſenſe of elevated and elegant minds) which could be ſo impreſſed by the uncommon talents of the underſtanding and the grace and charms of the perſon of the famous Ducheſſe Mazarin, who came over to England in Charles II.'s time, as to have addreſſed to her (if I miſtake not, when paſt 90) many complimentary, not to ſay amorous copies of verſes *. Such was St. Evremont!

I am

* If nature (or at leaſt ſociety, and the natural conſequence of it among men) admits of variety of food, &c.

I am not ſure, Sir, however, that our "prac-"tical philoſopher" may quite eſcape, in the laſt mentioned *trait* of the character, the laugh of every Britiſh preſent man of gallantry. "And gentle dullneſs ever loves a "joke." But to be ſerious, we may perhaps boaſt in our days of many a diamond of at leaſt as much *intrinſic* value, or more; but then ours would be, I believe, the rough natural diamonds, and conſequently, though they might *ſell for more*, could not, in that ſtate, be ſo ſhining.

&c. may ſhe not alſo admit of a variety of *manners?* After what I have ſaid of St. Evremont, or any of his contemporaries, here or elſewhere, I am ſtill ready to ſay and acknowledge, that all manners are, Indian, Tartarean, European, at leaſt *quoad* thoſe men under their influence, beſt, which afford thoſe men moſt ſatisfaction. What a variety of them even in our own hiſtories! Our own preſent manners, for inſtance, are very good manners, tho' certainly in general very unlike thoſe of St. Evremont, or perhaps of other civilized countries paſt or preſent, or of thoſe in ſome reſpects even of our very fathers, literature for inſtance, and the eſtimation of it. But will not happineſs here alſo, Sir, (the only real conſideration) which you ſo agreeably illuſtrate by that of water, find its level! Nay, and if in them, as well as ſpace and time, we ſtand on a point, ſhould that point, becauſe our own, or not our own, be the ſingle criterion of excellence?—This obſervation might, I think, be carried to many modes of arts and ſciences; architecture, muſic, &c. &c.

But

But whatever St. Evremont was, he was a Frenchman; and as ſuch, without doubt, neither loved nor practiſed plain eating; and if plain eating *be neceſſary to health*, and one or very few diſhes, as alſo no over-roaſting* boiling, no ſtews and mixed ſauces, what will be ſaid of the French nobility, who live on nothing elſe? Nay, if exerciſe and good hours be alſo neceſſary to health, what will be ſaid of the French in general, and particularly of the French ladies, who abſolutely take no exerciſe at all, who live on nothing but ragouts, and lie abed half the day? What will be ſaid of other nations on the continent, who roaſt their meat much more than either the French or we; particularly the Danes, who both roaſt and boil, literally and conſtantly, all the juices out of their meat? As to ragouts, I believe every one of thoſe nations deal in them much more

* It is however a miſtake that the French roaſt ſo much more than we do. On the contrary, they often roaſt leſs; as to boiling, it is indeed well known that they every day eat, and many Frenchmen through the nation little beſides, beef boiled to rags.

than

than we do; and in regard to wine alſo, do they not all (except, indeed, the northern, who cannot get it, and ſubſtitute, I believe, much worſe liquors, brandy, &c. &c.) uſe ſcarcely any other liquor, mixed pretty largely with water? Little, indeed, of that ſmall-beer, which you inform us is "the whole-"ſomeſt and beſt of all liquors, except good "ſoft water." And in regard to ſervants, and other common people, particularly the French, it is well known that they are very apt to drink of it to exceſs and to drunken-neſs, and bad wine too.—If then wine, which you ſay "undoubtedly produces nine in ten "of all the gouts in this world," ſo particularly gives the gout, why have they all ſo much leſs of it than we? Is it not therefore, Sir, on the whole, *poſſible*, that you have, even here, fallen on that common, and ſo often inevitable, error of humanity, of ſubſtituting an *apparent* for a *real* cauſe?

In regard to the ill effect of acids on the human ſtomach, I am willing, as I ought, blindly to give credit to a perſon of experience, ſenſe, and knowledge, I want on the

ſubject;

ſubject; but that they are pernicious *in the degree* ſet forth, my own experience and knowledge, and common obſervation, may, I think, juſtify ſome doubt. And in regard to the fermentation made in the human ſtomach, and its being aſcertained by a toaſt and water, heated by a fire of equal heat with that of the human ſtomach, I muſt take the freedom, all-ignorant as I am, of more than doubting. No, Sir; I have no doubt but that artificial experiments of this ſort are extremely fallacious and inconcluſive, in regard to the vital heat and natural functions of the interior conſtitution of man. And that bread ſhould, from any chemical or other proceſs, be proved to be at laſt, not the ſtaff of life, but its ſtumbling-block, I can by no means whatever give credit to.

Is Nature, and Nature's ways, to be thus fixed and known? and ſhall man, becauſe he knows of *ſuch a kind* of heat, and *ſuch and ſuch* properties of the human ſtomach, whether the digeſtive, &c. &c. know *all* its properties, minutiæ, correctives, operations? and ſhall man, from what he ſees in his little

expe-

experiments, decide upon thoſe interior ones of God and Nature? Excuſe me, Sir, I could by no means ſuppoſe it, though all experience ſtood neuter between us. But that bread, the apparently beneficial food of man, and pudding that of children, ſhould be the bane of man and child, artificial experiment and human aſſertion can never ſatisfy my mind. I reſpect, Sir, and will ever follow the general faſhions of the world; but in this particular of reſpect to name and authority, merely as ſuch, ever (whatever the conſequence) have I been, and ever will I remain, unfaſhionable and ſingular.

But there is one means of health you have indeed touched, but not dwelt upon as I could have wiſhed; and for this plain reaſon, *from you* it might have *been adopted.* And really, ſince men will reverence authority even in ill, it is a pity not to avail one's ſelf of it in good: I mean, Sir, the particular of good hours, or rather that of the proper portion of ſleep. I verily believe, and again from obſervation and experience, that an attention to this one thing would reſtore numberleſs people

people to health, when nothing elſe will. Who has not experienced the charming ſenſation (I may ſay the immediate one) of early riſing? To ſome invalids, I well know, by my own experience, that an hour, nay half, nay a quarter of an hour's over or under ſleeping, will ſometimes affect him perhaps the whole day, if not many. You ſay, "Sleep "ſeven hours in ſummer, and eight in win-"ter." Is not this too much, I mean in general? for will you not alſo recommend ſome variation agreeable to the temporary feeling of the individual, who is beſt judge for himſelf, as alſo to various conſtitutions or ages? Yet even here too I have no doubt but that conſtitutions naturally vigorous and ſtrong will, as in the other caſes, reſiſt much exceſs; and that here too Nature will not ſuffer herſelf to be always and eaſily overturned and deſtroyed.

But you have, Sir, in various parts of your work, diſclaimed very candidly the power commonly attributed to phyſicians and medicine; and you moſt reaſonably ſay, an honeſt and a good phyſician will often withdraw his medicines, and truſt to Nature. I

quite join iſſue with you, Sir, whilſt I applaud your ingenuous freedom. But I fear that I exceed your limits in this queſtion. Let me, however, as freely offer you my notions, ſuch as they may be, on the ſubject.

As to the power of medicine, then, or rather the effect in practice, I confeſs it, I have very little faith. That a phyſician often cures his patient, and oftener does him good, I am, however, willing to believe; but then I believe alſo that he often kills him, and oftener does him hurt. Which of theſe he does moſt, on balance, I really do not pretend to gueſs; and whether, on the whole, a country would be beſt off with phyſicians, or none at all.

This muſt, I am aware, however, appear a ſtrange doubt; but the opinions, objections, or deciſions of the groſs of mankind have grown to have very little weight with me, who moſt readily adopt your ſentiment, that "men are in general ſo ſhort-ſighted, as "never to look back or forward beyond the "ken of their noſe, and therefore never ſee "either diſtant cauſes or effects." To the few who

who do look farther, my reaſons are theſe: 1. If a phyſician often cures, it is, if I may uſe the term, in the *common place* of phyſic, and where ſome other ſenſible perſon, not a phyſician, your own ſelf perhaps, would cure you juſt as well. If, for inſtance, you have a common fever, ſuch a perſon would recommend, I ſhould imagine, bleeding, living low, and, as ſoon as the fever intermitted, the bark; after this, evacuations; and if the ſtomach is out of order, or perhaps the head, ſymptoms may manifeſtly demand an emetic. Saline draughts, ſalt of wormwood, and above all abſtinence, are as obvious as they are common every where. A pleuriſy, very much I ſuppoſe the ſame proceſs, only more bleeding; but in both theſe caſes James's Powders (can I introduce them too often?) would be preferable to the firſt phyſician in the world; for they would *certainly* be too powerful for Nature, which he *certainly*, if ſhe choſe to reſiſt him, would not. In an ague, every one knows, you ſhould take a vomit, leave to nature a fit or two, then apply the bark; which we can all procure of the apothecary, without any pothooks or hangers. This, or nearly this, I imagine, to be open

to all the world, who even have not minutely conſidered theſe *common* caſes. How many of theſe common caſes may be cured, as well and as ſoon as your groom cures your horſe, merely by two or three purges! But in uncommon and nameleſs ones, that is, in nine caſes out of ten, what will, and what can, the phyſician do for you? If he is a wiſe one, he will perhaps himſelf anſwer, nothing at all; and were it not for thoſe reſiſtleſs guineas, would he not much oftener tell you ſo? Yet he *may* in theſe nameleſs caſes do you good; he may hit your caſe: aye, but he alſo may not; and what an alternative, when the odds are perhaps twenty to one, he does not! But this is not all; if he does you *no good*, he certainly does you *harm*: there is no medium, and for this plain reaſon, he obſtructs that real phyſician, Nature, who, we know, is always at work, and by the beſt poſſible means, in your favour. Yes, Nature, who, you know, will cure you if you cut your finger, will equally ſtrive at it in every poſſible diſorder; and nothing can be a ſtronger argument againſt phyſic, than that, if it does not aſſiſt, it contradicts, obſtructs,

ſtructs, interferes with Nature, and all her operations.

But Mr. Such-a-one was at death's door, and Dr. Such-a-one made a ſurprizing cure;—every gentleman and every lady will, when ill, have this ſame doctor, who ſaved the life of the gentleman: the doctor grows the faſhion, and the gentleman and lady are ſcarcely ſorry to find themſelves ill, and to have the occaſion of calling for this great man. How continually does all this happen! and yet may not, here too, the doctor have been in luck? Nay, may he not perhaps have done all he could to kill that very patient, who recovered ſo ſurprizingly under his hands?—Moſt certainly; and who ſhall ſay, whether it was the Doctor conquered Nature, or Nature the Doctor?—But thus gentlemen, and thus ladies, have ever decided, and ever will, to the end of the ſocial world.

What a machine is man's! what a complication of cauſe and effect within, in many, many complaints incident to him! Does the phyſician always know even which is which? Conſult two different ones in different rooms;

and ſee: if two phyſicians do diſagree, nay more, if they do not give the ſame, but contrary remedies; even ſo contrary, ſo contradictory, as hot and cold, relaxing and reſtringent; if they do this, will any one, in this inſtance at leaſt, ſay any thing for THE ART? Alas! they do ſo continually; and whether they do or not, depend on it, may I not ſay? they do nothing for you in this complicated or unknown caſe, as thouſands can at this moment tell us: happy indeed, if they do nothing *againſt* you! Though if they do (happy for them) no one knows any thing of the matter; all the miſchief is flung on poor Nature; as the cure, if it happens, is taken from her, and given to the Doctors. This, I am afraid, is very much the ſtate of phyſic, and impoſſible to be otherwiſe. *The art*, as *an art*, is ſurely hardly deſerving the name; I ſpeak here ſomewhat feelingly, having myſelf paſſed through their hands (though never, Sir, I aſſure you, quite blindly and implicitly) in a caſe none of them ſaw the origin of, and conſequently did me the leaſt good. The *beſt* phyſician *with me* is not He, the deep phyſical *ſtudent*, He, to uſe that comprehenſive, great term, the *re-*

gular phyſician, who knows by heart every thing that has been written from Galen downwards; but He, who, whether regularly educuted or irregularly, is keen, diſcerning, judicious *by nature:* and, above all, who, added to this natural ken, this intuitive ſagacity, has ſeen a great variety of caſes, and perhaps, ſtill more, who knows my particular conſtitution, and, beſt of all, if he has one ſimilar to it himſelf. Without this requiſite of knowing my conſtitution, which indeed hardly ever happens, I may be given what will work ſo much more effect on me than another man, or ſo much leſs (it is perhaps all one) that what would do him good, may do me harm; and ſtill more, I may have ſome natural diſpoſition that runs counter to, and deſtroys to me an effect, which to another would be moſt beneficial. Add to this, does it never happen that your phyſician has his *favourite* medicines; whether from what has particularly agreed, or he has thought has particularly agreed with himſelf, (very unlike you perhaps) or any other cauſe? And always muſt you not be liable to the conſequences drawn *for* you *by* your phyſician, however prone he, as other men,

muſt

muſt be, to draw them falſely from given premiſes.

Some conſtitutions, for inſtance, cannot take rhubarb, whilſt, in general, it is well known to be a moſt efficacious remedy; but how many other ſuch natural diſcordances may there be within us, which neither the phyſician nor patient can poſſibly know! Every man has the opportunity of knowing in himſelf an averſion to cheeſe, veal, lamb, pig, or any other food; but cannot have the ſame opportunity in medicines.

But farther, even granting the phyſician to be ſo peculiarly diſcerning as to mark ſimilar caſes, can that ſimilarity be always, or even often, abſolute? Nay, is it not more likely to be *really* only apparent to ever ſo diſcerning a phyſician? I have myſelf felt perhaps ten different ſorts of head-ach, and more of other feelings of ill health: how am I to expreſs or paint and diſtinguiſh any one of thoſe feelings to another man; or find in language more than one common name of head-ach, ſtomach-ach, &c. &c. for any, to myſelf?

myſelf? And granting the phyſician to ſee farther into all or any of theſe complaints than any other man, is there any advantage in this? nay, is there not a diſadvantage, if he only ſees *farther*, and does not ſee *to the end?*

In enumerating theſe various difficulties, that appear to me to ſtand in the way of phyſic, I by no means mean to ſay that they *always* ſtand in its way. Poſſibly, too, I may have put ſome of them in too ſtrong a light, though unknowingly, and without deſign. My deſign is, indeed, different; and I can no way expreſs it better, or more truly, than you, Sir, expreſs your own deſign, in your own words, when you tell us of your wiſh to correct the abſurd proceeding of mankind; and add, that "it is very ſurprizing "that mankind in general ſhould be miſtaken "and miſled for ever, in the ſame perpetual "round of fruitleſs attempts to repair and "eſtabliſh health: not the ignorant vulgar "only, but the ſenſible, the judicious, men "of parts and knowledge in other things, in "this caſe equally blind, ſhould purſue, with "the ſame vain hope, after repeated diſap-

" pointments, the thouſand and ten thouſand " idle arts and tricks of medication and " quackery."

Perhaps, however, we carry the *principle* of this quotation to *different ends*, and I may apply it leſs to what is called quackery than you do; nor will I, uncandidly, neceſſarily impute to the phyſician, in it, the cauſe or bias of the profeſſion. The effects of pre-poſſeſſion and prejudice, indeed, *you* frequently lament, Sir, in very ſtrong and good terms; and yet, alas! Sir, how often do we not *all* make *one* exception (nothing ſo plain as other mens) and that *one* exception the *ſingle* point where *the application* is neceſſary or wanting? And upon my word, Sir, though we ſhould ſwear as much and as faſt as Lord Peter, that our loaf was mutton, no one would believe us any more than him; unleſs, indeed, we had the *cauſa proemugena* in our favour. You alſo expreſs as ſtrongly your deſpair of turning aſide their current, if I ſhould not rather ſay their torrent.—Not quite improperly here too might I, I think, make uſe of your words to expreſs, better than in my own, my own ſimilar ſentiments;

and

and in them ſay, " If I have hazarded any " thing new, or contrary to received opi- " nions, it has been from a thorough con- " viction of its truth, however dangerous to " fame and fortune;" (theſe words I can indeed only uſe on the ſuppoſition that I really were liable to the ſame ſacrifice) " both " which I know are more eaſily acquired by " complying with the world, than attempt- " ing to reform it. But it muſt be ſomebody " equally indifferent to both, as I am, who " will venture to tell ſuch truths as are more " likely to recoil and hurt the author, than " to convince and conciliate the bulk of man- " kind."—You have, I doubt it not at all, ſpoken ſincerely; but indeed you have much miſtaken as to *the immediate effect* of *your* novelties.

You have claſſed, in three claſſes, the cauſes of diſorders incident to the human body. In regard to thoſe other diſorders you alſo ſeem ſo well aware of (I mean thoſe diſorders of the human mind) which manifeſt themſelves in the various falſe judgements and opinions we perpetually ſee in the world; may not *they* all be reduced to *two kinds?*—

I have heard men claſſed and diſtinguiſhed by "knaves and fools;" "the impoſing, and "the impoſed upon."—They may, at leaſt, I verily think, be all diſtinguiſhed and comprehended in theſe two claſſes; viz. *thoſe who believe too much, and thoſe who believe too little*; and then, the common run of mankind will be comprehended in the *firſt*, and the ſuperior in the *ſecond*. But perhaps it yet might be nearer the truth to ſay, that *theſe* were the *two* defective *characteriſtics* of *the human mind*; for not uncommonly does the *ſame mind* do both; viz. believe *too much*, and *too little*. That ſuperior men, however, over-refine continually, who can doubt, after the productions they have expoſed to the world? and that they uſe their parts and reaſon to cheat themſelves and their readers? I have given ſome inſtances; but what a catalogue might be made of ſuch men, in proof of the aſſertion; whilſt Newton and Locke ſtood almoſt alone, amongſt crouds of really great men, who had exerciſed their talents in error!

It is needleſs to make out a numerous liſt of theſe ſyſtematic philoſophers; the intelli-

gent will do it for themſelves, and to the unintelligent it is uſeleſs. I will only ſay, certainly your friend Paracelſus, with his *elixir proprietatis*, would not want company, whether ancient or modern.

Though no great man myſelf, I would ſteer clear, if poſſible, of their practice; and, whilſt I ſought after *uncommon* truths, would wiſh not to reject *common*, and ſtill leſs *proved*, ones *. It is, however, certain, as you ſay, that

* When the new law of Nature was diſcovered in the Polypus, I have not the leaſt doubt, though I do not know the fact, that *ſuperior men* rejected the account, even after evidence ſufficient to faith. They now do the very thing as to the exiſtence of the Patagonians; for is not Mr. Clarke's letter to Dr. Maty, of the Royal Society, equal to viſible demonſtration? No, ſay they, we know of no ſuch men upon the earth; and, ſay I, what then? —They do ſo now, as to the effect of frights, or other cauſes of extraordinary births. How can it be, ſay they; aye, and after being told by a learned man, or learned men, that the thing cannot be; and after perhaps his giving you twenty learned ſyllogiſms to prove it?—I ſay, and only ſay, it *is*; ſuch is *the matter of fact*. Nay, why will you, you ſo much ſuperior to the credulous vulgar, circumſcribe Nature; or rather, why will you not liſten to any *new information* ſhe may give you? Can you look at the ſun, and doubt *her power?* Can you, in the ſame breath, tell us, that *finite* is, in matter, ſubject to *infinity*; that

that he who adopts, and ſtill more who advances, *uncommon truths*, runs the riſque of paſſing, in all common companies, for a very abſurd fellow, and had better hold his tongue. If underſtood, ſince uncommon, he is odd or abſurd, perhaps; if not underſtood, obſcure, dark:— which puts me in mind of the poor gentleman who loſt his ſight one evening, all on a ſudden, and told his friend it was a ſilly joke to put out the candles. It is a paradox, yet I verily believe, that *uncommon falſehoods* will ſucceed much better; and however univerſally be received the old axiom, that *truth is congenial to the mind of man*, (I alſo, Sir, have my novelties) by no means am I convinced of the general truth of the propoſition, or at leaſt of its not being liable to much reſtriction and diſtinction; but this is certainly neither the time nor place to ſay why I think ſo.

Though admitted as true as I believe it to be, I ſhould be ſorry to propoſe, in companies of gentlemen and ladies, the few ideas

that exiſtence and end are free from cauſe and beginning; poſſibly that three are one; none of which will I controvert with you: can you do all this, and refuſe even to her, in this little inſtance, even poſſibility?

here

here ſet forth about the art of phyſic, as I ſhould the objections I have ventured upon to your new ſyſtem, which I ſee (*novelty* is powerful, and *authority* more ſo) is warmly adopted in companies of indeed men above the common claſſes of mankind. Nay, I am told, that ſome gentlemen are actually leaving off wine; though perhaps they have drunk it with excellent ſucceſs for twenty years together. I hope, they alſo take care to eat no pepper with their peas, no vinegar with their lobſter, no muſtard with their gooſe, and no ſalt with any thing. But, as to the wine, I ſhould be glad to hear, at the end of the twelve month, how the new practice agreed with their ſtomachs. To uſe your own very elegant figure, and your argument too, Sir, how will the happy, though ſeduced female, preſerve her endearments, when ſhe voluntarily throws off and refuſes all perſonal commerce and connexion with her beloved ſeducer! [Vide the Pamphlet, p. 64.]

You have inſtanced, Sir, ſomething of the bold, but *falſe* novelties, in the book I have followed you in remarking upon: allow me to inſtance, in purſuance of my own plan, ſomewhat

ſomewhat particularly, in one more, that lately met with credulity enough—for thus, I ſay, do both credulity and doubt, the believing *too much* and *too little*, in their turns miſlead mankind; that met with credulity enough, to occaſion, I think, ſeven editions in about as many weeks; and I do it the more readily, as it not only ſerves my preſent purpoſe of ſetting forth that precipitate judgment and deciſion, I would, myſelf, avoid either way, and recommend to whomſoever I happened to apply to, in theſe ſheets, to avoid; but alſo, as it is on a ſubject, which, I think, is never foreign to an inhabitant of that country, whoſe ſtreets ſwarm with men that, at leaſt, *think themſelves* competent judges of it; I mean Politics, that common name for many a ſtrange thing. Yes, Sir, the famous *Nil alienum*, with only ſubſtituting *Politicus ſum* for *Homo ſum*, may, I think, always ſtand for a motto to almoſt any political Engliſh reader. You will poſſibly tell me, he might as well perhaps ſay, with the ſilly fellow in Moliere, *Medicus ſum!*—But, however, ſo the fact is, and let me produce my example. It is, in truth, certainly as likely, at the leaſt, to recoil on the writer, as any thing you have obſerved

obſerved to have been ſo on yourſelf, Sir; but it is in point to my plan and purpoſe, and pleaſe to take it, though it ſhould even do ſo, as follows, in that famous politician Mrs. Macaulay's pamphlet of laſt year. How it was received, among innumerable *prædiſpoſed* readers, is well known; but her reaſoning and her leading principle is this, *viz.*

"That the modes of government, which "have ever been enforced on credulous man, "have been, all of them, not only deficient "in producing the juſt ends of government, "*viz.* the full and impartial ſecurity of the "rights of nature, but that they have been ra- "ther formidable and dangerous cabals a- "gainſt the peace, happineſs, and dignity of "ſociety; is not owing to any moral impoſ- "ſibility in the forming a ſyſtem, which ſhould "anſwer their juſt ends. The wiſdom of "man is fully adequate to the ſubject. It "would be unworthy the idea we ought to "form of God, to ſuppoſe him ſo capricious a "Being as to beſtow that high degree of wiſ- "dom and ingenuity *as*" (is that quite grammatical, and ſhould not the word be *that?*)

" we often ſee diſplayed in regulating the " more trifling concerns of life, which we " often ſee diſplayed in the ſupport of tyran- " nic and deſtructive ſyſtems, and the not " rendering him adequate to regulations ſo " neceſſary to *his*" (does this mean *God's*, for ſo the grammar requires? But it muſt mean, I ſuppoſe, *Man's*) " ſecurity, happineſs, and " perfection; and without which, all the " benevolent deſigns of providence, in his " creation, appear to be totally fruſtrated."

Theſe are the words, Sir, of that deep politician and philoſopher; and they paſſed on a ſufficient number of readers, to have occaſioned, I think *, ſeven rapid and numerous editions. And yet are they worthy of a refutation? To you, not indeed, I think, Sir; but to that Lady, and her admirers, if I ſaid any thing, would I ſay;

* This pamphlet was, it is well known, in anſwer to another, which had alſo had wonderful ſucceſs, and paſſed through not a leſs number of editions: and it was, in truth, the work of a perſon of infinite genius. Yet (and, I hope, this is now no paradox) the pamphlet itſelf, all ſucceſsful as it was, was, from one end to the other, made up of falſe facts, miſrepreſentation, and falſe reaſoning, as it were eaſy to demonſtrate.

" The

"The imperfection of every government "that has *ever yet exiſted*, is no argument "that a perfect one may not be formed?" I aſk, how?—in *theory*, I ſuppoſe.—If man has *always* been ſo wicked, and is ſo *ſtill*, will he not, probably, *always* continue ſo? and *how* then are you to get *perfection* from this *imperfection*? As to the great wiſdom practiſed by men in private concerns, and the facility of it, ſuppoſing the caſes really ſimilar, and equally eaſy, does this Lady find, even in her own concerns, and in her own little family, all this charming regulation and *perfection*? Does ſhe even, judging of herſelf, find *herſelf* free *always* from bias or prejudice towards every ſervant or dependant; and is ſhe perfectly informed of the conduct of each? Does this Politician and Philoſopher argue alſo from the completion of tyranny and ill, and ſuppoſe one and the ſame principle to operate in the oppreſſion of mankind, and the governing mankind perfectly? And does ſhe argue from the incomprehenſible manifeſtation of Providence * in all other inſtances, that

* Here is, I think, an *argumentum à priori* with a vengeance! Aye, Sir, and is it not relying with a vengeance,

that Providence will, in this particular of government, ordain ſecurity, happineſs, *perfection?*

Some gentlemen, I have heard, do not like their miſtreſſes the worſe for being a little romantic; perhaps *the admirers* of this lady may be of that opinion.

But I ought, perhaps, after all, to apologize for taking up ſo much time, as to give a ſerious regular anſwer to ſuch a reverie; nor can it be ſaid to be in point as to the *ingenuity* with which ſuperior men will force their talents *beyond* the limits of truth and reaſon, for *this* deſerves not even the title of *ſophiſtry* †. But the reception of it, however, ſerves,

geance, on that ſame *cauſa proemugena* we have been talking about?—Nay more, will you not grant here, at leaſt, though not in the gout, that the *cauſa*, *Anglicè*, active and efficient, has not needed to be *very* active on thoſe conſtitutions, to whom, in this inſtance, it has been *efficient?*

† Another example of this occurs to me, and I cannot forbear adding it.—At the beginning of the laſt war, a very ingenious, learned, and well-written work appeared, called, An Eſtimate of the Manners, &c. It meant to ſhew, that *the cauſe* of our then ill ſucceſs in the war was the effeminate, daſtardly manners of the age, &c. &c. &c. The book ſold immenſely, for it was malicious and malevolent; and I am not ſure that the perpetual and unexampled ſucceſs of the enſuing war quite convinced its admirers,

ſerves, I think, to ſhew the degree of credulity I impute to the human mind, which was indeed here my object. Can any one ſuppoſe my object that of perſuaſion, though by rhetoric ever ſo ſuperior to my own, to *any* profeſſor, of any party or religion? Still more, to any fanatic or enthuſiaſt in either? Alas! Sir, who can afford to give up any opinion upon proof? Is it conſidered what havock this muſt make, what confuſion in every man's mind, except only in that ideal one, whoſe opinions are founded only upon, to him, real cauſes?

But it is time to releaſe you, and perhaps to make ſome excuſe, in addition to what I

mirers, that *the cauſe* of the diſſertation was precipitancy, pride, malevolence, and human folly, in a ſenſible, ſtrong mind.

Yet I muſt add to this, too, that after that war, I, and every one, remember innumerable pamphlets in proof of another pleaſant practice of mankind; I mean the confounding the *preceding* an event, and being *the cauſe* of it. The inſtance I allude to is that of a certain great miniſter, who governed during that war. Alas! Sir, every one of the works I have mentioned is, with all its innumerable editions, vaniſhed even like a meteor, an *ignis fatuus*; and has, to the vulgar even, proved itſelf *not* fire. And thus, Sir, ſhall not only this, but even your work, vaniſh and die away, if equally a ſhade inſtead of a ſubſtance!

have

have already ſaid, for having offered ſo many reaſonings about the precipitation of writers or readers. Yet I flatter myſelf you will ſee my *end* in it, and not think it quite foreign to my plan and purpoſe. To many a writer I controverted, I ſhould little think of purſuing the ſame mode of argumentation; but to a gentleman who manifeſts not only ſo many marks of ſtrong and lively judgment, and, above all, who profeſſes the generous intention of purſuing truth merely for truth's ſake, I could not forbear expoſing to his own conſideration, what I have always thought the only means, in looking into the origin or fountain-head of the purſuit, in the human mind *. I anſwer not for being always myſelf

* After having inſtanced ſo much of the influence of authority, in oppoſition to ſenſe and reaſon, let me indulge myſelf in that rare ſatisfaction of remarking on a recent novelty, in oppoſition to authority; and, as I believe, entirely conſonant to ſenſe and reaſon. I mean, that of a late free and ingenious little work, which boldly condemns allegory in painting and ſtatuary, even againſt the Raphaels, and innumerable other great names. Doubtleſs, the artiſts and the connoiſſeurs will not eaſily give up the feelings of abſurd cuſtom; though, in *due time*, they will probably reflect, that nothing can, intrinſically, be more abſurd than to look upon two figures ſimilarly repre-

ſelf right; nay, I ſuppoſe it not. I only anſwer for my intention; and I hope, that whilſt writing anonymouſly, I have not, with that common practice of the preſent age, treated my opponent with any degree of that undue freedom that is practiſed along with it; or otherwiſe than would have been conſiſtent with politeneſs and propriety, if I had addreſſed him nominally.

I end then, Sir, where I began, by ſaying, that matter of fact weighs with me beyond all the reaſoning, and the fineſt reaſoning in the world. It has, I own, prompted me to a different belief from that of your pamphlet, and, I believe, moſt of the readers of it; at leaſt, of thoſe I have met

repreſenting men to their ſenſes; one of which is to paſs upon thoſe ſenſes for a river, or ſomething elſe as unlike a man.—Have not all theſe allegoric men of taſte forgot to diſtinguiſh between the operations of the imagination, and thoſe of the ſenſes?—between a touch upon diſcord, and dwelling upon it?—between (ſhould I be right, Doctor, *in your way*, if I ſaid) a touch upon *poiſon*, and dwelling upon it?—The ſame writer is, I ſee, about to publiſh an Account of the Greek church; and, whoever he be, one may, from this ſpecimen, I think, look for ſomething well worth the peruſal of readers of taſte and enlargement.

with. And, let me confeſs, Sir, very much has it been the precipitate, as well as the ſelf-ſatisfied and deciſive reaſonings, at leaſt as I have thought them, I have happened to hear advanced in its favour, that has urged me to what I, at leaſt, have thought a refutation of them, in this way, which, in truth, I do not much like.

Your object in your pamphlet, however, is I am perſuaded, honeſt truth. Mine, you will do me the juſtice to believe, is no other, in my contradiction to it. As ſuch, you will not, I truſt, diſapprove the endeavours of an opponent, in the few ſheets he offers to your conſideration; who, whilſt he takes ſo different a route, is actuated by the ſame principle; and, whilſt he controverts your ſentiments, admires your abilities as well as your intention.

I am, Sir, &c.